

CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

**Special Public Hearing Meeting
Monday, April 13, 2009 - - 4:00 p.m.**

Present: Mayor William D. Euille, Vice Mayor Redella S. Pepper, Members of Council Ludwig P. Gaines, K. Rob Krupicka, Timothy B. Lovain, Paul C. Smedberg and Justin M. Wilson.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Mr. Hartmann, City Manager; Mr. Spera, Acting City Attorney; Ms. Evans, Deputy City Manager; Mr. Jinks, Deputy City Manager; Mr. Castrilli, Communications Director, City Manager's Office; Mr. Gates, Assistant City Manager; Police Captain Ogden; Ms. Boyd, Director, Citizen Assistance; Mr. Johnson, Chief Financial Officer; Mr. Doku, Office of Management and Budget; Ms. Wheel, Office of Management and Budget; Mr. Schultz, Office of Management and Budget; Mr. Eisinger, Office of Management and Budget; Ms. Davis, Director, Office of Housing; Ms. Collins, Assistant City Manager/Director, Human Services; and Mr. Lloyd.

Recorded by: Jacqueline M. Henderson, City Clerk and Clerk of Council

OPENING

1. Calling the Roll.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Euille, and the City Clerk called the roll; all members of Council were present.

2. Public Hearing on the City Manager's Proposed Annual Operating Budget for FY 2010 (Including Schools) and the Proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for FY 2010-2015 (including the School CIP.) Adoption is Scheduled for Monday, April 27, 2009. In Addition, a Public Hearing on the Ordinance Establishing the Real Property Tax Rate Will Be Held on April 18, 2009, at 9:30 a.m.

Chief Financial Officer Johnson provided a current status of the City's financial picture and responded to questions of City Council.

The following persons participated in the public hearing on the budget:

1. John Smucker, 108 N. Quaker Lane, said that in 1980, he asked Council to take his taxes and keep the services to the poor at a level of what they are, and he hoped Council keeps the tax rate at what it is or raises it. He said his message in 1980 on social services was that it cannot be cut, especially services for the homeless. Mr. Smucker advocated for senior services, for the homeless, for meals on wheels and other programs.

2. Nury Marquez, 5809 Duke Street, representing the Hispanic Committee of Virginia, spoke on behalf of the 600 plus Hispanic clients and their families who receive services from the Hispanic Committee and who reside in Alexandria. She noted the strain on family members from living in one of the most expensive housing markets with limited job opportunities. She said that in order to provide the support services they need, the Committee needs the City's support and she asked that the Council grant their funding request.

3. Bob Eiffert, 1418 Juliana Place, representing the Commission on Aging, said they appreciate the support Council has given to older Alexandrians and for its support of programs for older residents. He asked Council to do everything possible to minimize the effect of the budget cuts on the most vulnerable populations the City serves, noting that one vacancy in adult protective services represents a 25 percent staff reduction, and caseloads are running at 25-30 percent above published state standards. Mr. Eiffert also spoke to the cuts in senior taxi, and he noted that a bus driver position was being held vacant and asked that the position not be eliminated.

4. DeeDee Tostanoski, 417 Underhill Place, member, VOICE, Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement, spoke of the reduction in the one cent of the real estate tax that is set aside for affordable housing, and she asked Council to retain the one cent for affordable housing. She asked how her sons, who have deep roots in the community, will be able to afford to stay in Alexandria. She said she is more than willing to pay a higher tax rate to maintain the diversity of the City she loves.

5. Kari Galloway, 1 East Luray Avenue, co-chair of the Alexandria Homeless Services Coordinating Committee, asked those in support of her in the audience to stand (approximately 10 people stood.) Ms. Galloway said she is on the executive committee of the Alexandria Council of Human Service Organizations, and between the two groups, she is able to provide a safety net as much as possible for a lot of people in the community. She spoke about Friends of Guest House, which is a transitional facility that provides support services for women ex-offenders, and it is critical to have Council's support.

6. Peter Lunt, 412 Pitt Mews, on the board of directors of Carpenters Shelter and chair of Guest House, spoke of the closing of Guest House in 2003 and how it was reopened in April 2004. He said they are concerned that the housing trust fund be continued. He said the non-profits need the funds more than ever during these tough times.

7. Theresa Caragol, 705 Norfolk Lane, on the board of Guest House, spoke in support of Guest House, noting that it is 11 percent funded by the housing trust fund, so it is critical for it to continue or get expanded for the homeless community.

8. Angela Scales, 1 East Luray Avenue, said she used to be a resident of Guest House and said Guest House has given her the extra push she needed, as she is now employed.

9. Gary Carr, 216 Aspen Street, spoke in support of the running tracks at the two middle schools - Hammond and George Washington Middle Schools.

10. Michael Nardolilli, 4022 Hummer Road, president, Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, spoke in support of the City's open space plan and the implementation of the work plan for 2009 and the Council's support of NVCT.

11. Kathleen Pepper, 5320 Thayer Avenue, chair, Alexandria Archeological Commission, asked for restored funding of the research historian position and the staffing and hours of the Alexandria Library special collections.

12. Geneva Matthews, 239 Lynhaven Drive, spoke in support of Senior Services of Alexandria and asked for continued support.

13. Lillie Finklea, 1210 Franklin Street, spoke in support of Senior Services of Alexandria and the employment office.

14. Carol Loftur-Thun, 2503 D N. Harrison Street, #114, executive director, Crisis Link, thanked Council for support of Crisis Link's hotlines and noted that their suicide calls have gone up 66 percent in the last eight months alone and went up 142 percent from October 2007 to October 2008. She noted that their calls from Alexandria residents from FY06 to FY08 had gone up 53.5 percent and calls from youth have gone up nearly 40 percent this year alone.

15. Jane Downing Knops, 509 S. Fairfax Street, a member of the Women's Giving Circle, spoke in support of Healthy Families Alexandria and she asked Council to not reduce funding for early childhood programs, noting that their clients seem to be the most disadvantaged and stressed in the City. She said those in the community who are blessed with resources may be relied upon for increases in emergency funding in order to keep their important social services viable for those in need.

16. Maggie Chamberlain, 5000 Polk Avenue, SEA president and a fifth grader at Polk Elementary School, spoke about the importance of having money in the City's budget for the renovations at Polk, noting that the multi-purpose room needed renovation and they need an elevator. She also noted that a couple of the classrooms have no windows.

17. Niomi Corbin, 5000 Polk Avenue, a second grade student at Polk

Elementary School, read her poem in support of the gym at Polk.

18. Julie Goodale, 5000 Polk Avenue, president-elect, James Polk Elementary School, along with her son Ryan Goodale, a second-grader at Polk, spoke of the needs at Polk and noted that the population of the school increased last year and noted that they are struggling to provide a safe environment where their children can run and play games in the gym.

19. David Caplan, 303 E. Glendale Avenue, Apt. 3, spoke in support of the Metrobus and DASH service, noting that he does not drive, and said the cumulative effect of all the Metrobus and DASH cuts inflict so much pain but solve a very small amount of the current budget crisis.

20. Kim Caplan, 303 E. Glendale Avenue, Apt. 3, noted that she does not drive and she spoke about the cumulative impacts that the cuts to DASH and Metrobus 10A will have on the ability of thousands of Alexandria residents to get to work. She urged Council to consider all available approaches to funding transit and to not take away a critical service for many residents.

21. Lacey Parker, 1315 Duke Street, said he is a Community Service Project participant, and he explained the importance of the CSP through the Northern Virginia Urban League and the need for additional funding and not a \$71,763 budget cut. He said that after he completed the program, he has stayed to help out, and the program has helped to turn his life around.

22. Kad Jata Turay, 1315 Duke Street, said she is an 18-year old senior at T.C. Williams High School and is a teenaged parent and a participant in the Northern Virginia Urban League Alexandria Resource Mothers Program, and she said she was concerned about the 14.5 percent cut they might have and noted what the program has done for her.

23. J. Glenn Eugster, 4022 Ellicott Street, spoke of the Ft. Ward Park maintenance area expansion, placing equipment vehicles, structures and various materials atop the graves of African-Americans who are buried in Ft. Ward Park, and the action has desecrated the graves within and in front of the maintenance and nursery area and has created a water run-off problem. He asked City Council to add \$150,000 in the 2010 budget to remove all evidence of the Ft. Ward Park maintenance and nursery area and begin archeological and research and surveys in 2010 to locate graves and structures.

24. Jonathan Gueverra, 3001 N. Beauregard Street, member of the board of directors of the new Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, said he is the provost of Northern Virginia Community College Alexandria campus and noted that the campus has the second highest enrollment at the college. He said a diverse economy and diverse economic base is the best way to make a City sustainable, and AEDP's efforts have been underfunded as it relates to attracting and marketing of new

businesses. Last week AEDP provided additional information to Council detailing the programs and initiatives they think are most critical to the City's health over two years, which include facilitating redevelopment of Landmark, targeting restaurant and retail users for the growing number of vacant storefronts and providing their strategy for attracting a focus group of companies to the City.

25. Nick Gregory, 480 King Street, director of operations, Kimpton Hotels in Alexandria, said they employ about 400 employees and contribute about \$3 million to the City annually. Mr. Gregory said he serves on the board of directors of the new Alexandria Economic Development Partnership and said it is time to focus on Alexandria's economic future and to vote funds to make a real difference, and they need to increase the economic benefits that are generated by the City's tourism industry, including expansion of the hours of the trolley on King Street. He said the City needs to find additional sources of revenue to grow the commercial tax base and he asked that work continue on promoting economic development.

26. Francis Terrell, Quaker Lane, speaking on behalf of the descendents of Ft. Ward, the Oakland Baptist Church and the Seminary Civic Association, a community of African-Americans who have contributed land and labor to the City for generations, asked Council to help restore and preserve their heritage. She spoke of the graves and artifacts at the Park and asked the City to present a more complete picture of the entire history of Ft. Ward Park and that funds be included in the 2010 budget to begin to collect the information to research the African-American community that lived there for generations.

27. Annabelle Fisher, 5001 Seminary Road, said Council, department heads, City Manager and staff travel should be eliminated. The Sister Cities fund has \$100,000 and should be suspended. She said the Office on Women costs a lot of money and has a big staff and should be eliminated and operated as a non-profit or for-profit group and the funding could go toward DASH. Ms. Fisher said the Council needs to push the Schools to make greater cuts, especially those in central staff. She said the individuals who want to start their own small business should utilize the Small Business Administration. She said on non-profits, she should decide who she wants to give her money to and the Council should not bailout non-profits that can't make it. She said there should be more transparency in regard to Council for salaries and citizens should not have to FOIA to find out whether the City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk have received raises.

28. Dino Drudi, 315 N. West Street, spoke of the recession and said this is the circumstance to empty the rainy day fund, noting that needs for services will increase so the City needs to be prepared to fund those increases from the rainy day fund, which should be drawn to zero over the next three years. He said the City should fund the \$250,000 DASH cut, and DASH should take over the Alexandria portion of the 10A and 10B Metrobus routes and the King Street trolley. Mr. Drudi said library and recreation center funding should be funded, and the City cannot cut repairs and maintenance. He said the City should hesitate to increase any tax rate. He said the

City should also target for reduction to the extent legally allowed services disproportionately used by those illegally in the country.

29. Cathy Puskar, 801 N. Fairfax Street, Suite 402, chair, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, urged Council to take a much broader view of Alexandria's future, noting that it is time to address the short-term needs of delivering critical services to constituents and to stake-out a vision that will lead the City to a stronger economy and to plan and fund the infrastructure that is necessary to place Alexandria in the forefront of the next economic growth cycle. Ms. Puskar said Council and staff should implement a planning process for FY 2011 that will adopt a multi-year budget for operations and CIP projects, and the Chamber recommends a six-year budget cycle, so the businesses can plan development that coincides with the City's planning priorities. The planning of an integrated transportation system throughout the City will create transportation nodes for increased development. Efforts should be made to develop or redevelop the areas of the Waterfront, Potomac Yard, Eisenhower Valley, Landmark/Van Dorn and the Seminary Beauregard corridor through comprehensive planning efforts that encourage economically viable projects. Ms. Puskar said a multi-year operating budget could be coordinated with the CIP budget so that the City may plan for the use of cash capital or debt financing and anticipate the impact of the choices on the operations of the City.

30. Joseph Shumard, 801 N. Fairfax Street, acting president, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, said a substantial portion of the City's tax base is raised from businesses and businesses provide a substantial portion of the City's tax and non-tax revenue, which is derived from real estate tax, sales tax, business license tax, business personal property tax, hotel tax and meals tax, and in return, the level of services required by businesses are comparatively low when contrasted against residential services. He said the City must do more to support and expand the Alexandria business economy, and Council should consider reducing business license tax rates, and the Chamber recommends the City form a task force to study the issue. He said the Chamber urges the City to continue to provide resources for businesses to attract customers, such as the King Street trolley. He encouraged the City's continued support of the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, the Small Business Development Corporation and the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association.

31. Andrew Palmieri, 801 N. Fairfax Street, chair, government relations committee of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, spoke in support of adoption of a taxing method that projects predictable tax increases over the life of a multi-year budget cycle. The Chamber supports the City Manager's budget and priorities regarding public safety, education, and the social safety net, and they commend staff and Council for making difficult choices necessary to ensure that the needs remain an important priority for the City. Mr. Palmieri said they also support expanding hours of the King Street trolley.

32. Chet Avery, 16 E. Linden Street, representing the Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities, transportation committee, said the Commission wishes to

commend Council for the many measures it has taken to make the City one of the most accessible cities in America. He spoke about transportation issues related to the Metro Access fare waiver program and the budget memo #69 relating to DOT Paratransit and MetroAccess services. Mr. Avery said on the Metro Access waiver program, the Commission notes it is a vital program as part of the WMATA service for thousands of people. He said they feel there would be a saving of up to \$90,000 if MetroAccess users in the City had an opportunity to have their fare waived in using the DASH program. Mr. Avery said the Commission was dismayed that budget memo #69 was prepared without input to the Commission, and the memo shows it as the City was in error as relates to the analysis of the fare increases.

33. Roberta New, 105 W. Masonic View Avenue, member, Alexandria Community Services Board but speaking as a citizen, spoke in support of restoring funding to the CSB budget, especially for the positions in the schools and the detention center, the positions in home based services that support their children and families.

34. Robert MacNab, 408 S. Royal Street, asked Council to reconsider the mid-day, night and weekend DASH cuts, noting that it will now be worse than when it only had the Metrobus and said it's becoming a rush-hour only service in the southeast quadrant. Mr. MacNab spoke of buying hybrid buses and suggested buying cheaper buses and making DASH more useful instead.

35. Meredith MacNab, 408 S. Royal Street, spoke about the cuts to public transportation, noting that the cuts to the DASH system will have a devastating impact on riders. She said eliminating the AT4 and 34 loop during the day and on weekends, along with cutting Metro 10A means most will have to find another way to commute. She asked why the City doesn't consider cutting the contract for the free trolley and put that money to better use shoring up DASH.

36. Allen Lomax, 5021 Seminary Road, #730, co-chair, advocacy committee for the Homeless Services Coordinating Committee, which is comprised of representatives of over 30 public and non-profit agencies, noted that its mission is to eliminate homelessness in the City. He noted that some members must use their incomes to pay for mortgage or rent, buy food or pay for needed medical, mental or dental care for their children or themselves. He said they support restorations proposed in budget memo #73, specifically the funding restorations of \$763,241 for Human Services and Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse.

37. Bonnie O'Leary, 7518 Inzer Street, Springfield, outreach manager for the Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons, said their mission is to empower deaf and hard of hearing individuals and their families through education, advocacy and community involvement. She noted they were discouraged when they got a 20 percent cut for FY 2008 and 2009. She asked Council to consider restoring their funding to previous levels or to at least have level funding for FY 2010.

38. Lisa Jacobs, 2909 Richmond Lane, representing George Mason Elementary School PTA, asked Council for reaffirmation of the strong commitment to the school in this year's budget. Ms. Jacobs asked Council to keep in mind that a school system is only as strong as its teachers, they have pressing needs in the capital improvements at Ramsey and Polk Elementary Schools, and they are growing quickly, as the school system experienced the largest increase in enrollment in Virginia and may lead the trailers, new schools or both.

39. Stephanie Brown, 421 King Street, Suite 300, president and CEO, Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association, expressed the tourism industry's support for the King Street trolley. An increase in the transient lodging tax in FY 09 generated revenue to fund the trolley operations, and the expense has been considered a worthwhile investment by the tourism industry. Ms. Brown noted that ridership at the King Street Metro increased 4.5 percent in November and December and attracted \$134,000 in free advertising from the metro system, and the trolley has been a helpful tool in increasing city-wide hotel revenue through most of last year.

40. Jeannie Hodges, 1 W. Glendale Avenue, representing the Alexandria Commission for the Arts, thanked Council for its support and commitment to the arts and requested that Council maintain the current budget level. She noted that the arts is an important thread in the fiber of the community.

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THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED, upon motion by Councilman Krupicka, seconded by Councilman Gaines and carried 7-0, the City Council special public hearing meeting of April 13, 2009, was adjourned at 6:35 p.m. The voting was as follows:

Krupicka	"aye"	Pepper	"aye"
Gaines	"aye"	Lovain	"aye"
Euille	"aye"	Smedberg	"aye"
	Wilson	"aye"	

APPROVED BY:

WILLIAM D. EUILLE MAYOR

ATTEST:

Jacqueline M. Henderson, CMC, City Clerk